

St. Paul Lutheran Church ELCA

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MARCH 2025

"Lent, Springtime, Life"

The church season of Lent begins with a day that we call Ash Wednesday. The date of Ash Wednesday varies from year to year, depending on the date of Easter. Ash Wednesday this year is on March 5th. We have an opportunity to gather together in worship at St. Paul at 6:30 that evening. There is also an opportunity to gather together for a potluck meal in the fellowship hall at 5:30 p.m. More information is included elsewhere in this newsletter.

As we begin the liturgical church season of Lent, let me share with you these words from Edward Chinn (*"The Wonder of Words,"* C.S.S. Publishing, 1985). I have found them to be helpful in regards to this particular season. I hope you do, too.

"The word Lent comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which meant "springtime." This word was probably derived from the Old English word *lang*, which meant "long." By the eleventh century, the term *lencten* was being applied to the period when spring days had longer hours of light than in the short days of winter. As English Christians adopted the practice of fasting for forty weekdays, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Eve, this period of religious observance came to be known by the name of the season, "*Lencten*" (Spring). Abbreviated, the ancient term for the season of long days emerged in modern speech as *Lent*.

Lent originally meant "Spring." But what *is* the season of Spring? Perhaps you think of Spring as bursting seeds in the dark earth, as buds appearing on



tree limbs, and birds singing in the warm winds of early morning. But these are not Spring; they are the **results** of Spring.

Spring starts with a new adjustment between the earth and the heavens. That readjustment between the earth and the sun is called the *vernal equinox*. *Equinox* is either of two days of the year when the sun is directly above the earth's equator. The *vernal* (Spring) *equinox* occurs on March 20 or 21. The month of April would come in vain unless that yearly adjustment took place. When our old world tilts again toward the sun, winter ends and life begins. It is then that earth's possibilities, represented by a billion hidden seeds, become realities.

Lent can be a Springtime for you if you make the readjustment between earth and Heaven. Then the innumerable, hidden, buried possibilities in you can, like those seeds, become realities, too! As the sap rises into the tree branches, producing new buds that push dead leaves off the limb, so Heaven's new life can come into you, crowding out the old dead ways."

May God help us readjust and tilt our lives in the direction of the Son!

Pastor Mark S. Luepke

Join us For Worship

9:00 a.m. worship to praise God.

The Livestream can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#)



This past month we have prayed for the following: Dianne Miller, Steven Julifs, Bev Julien, JoAnn Garcia, Barb Lenn, Lori Dewey, Betty Steinke, Larry Wahler, JoDell Cruz, Sandy Julifs, Lila Edeus, and the family and friends of DJ Gordon.

Please contact Sue in the church office if you have a prayer request for the congregational prayer list.

Don't' forget to "Spring Ahead" your clocks before you go to bed on March 8! You wouldn't want to be late for church on Sunday.



LENT WORSHIP 2025

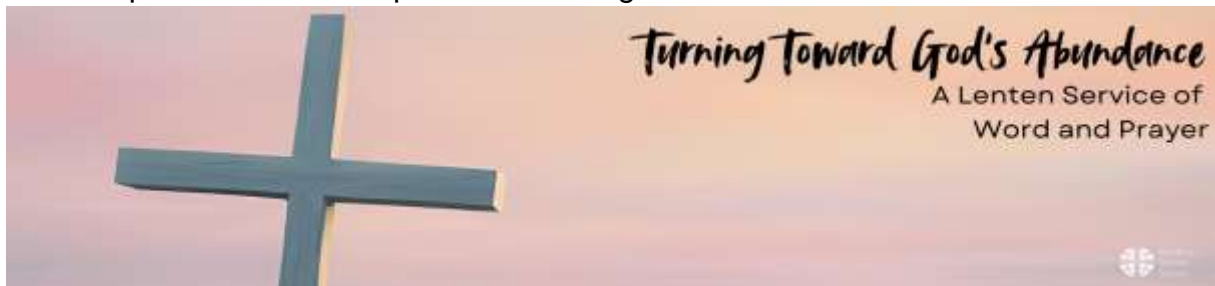
People of St. Paul, we will soon be entering the holy season of Lent. As we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we add opportunities for worship on Wednesdays.

Ash Wednesday

This year's Lenten journey begins on March 5 with Ash Wednesday. A potluck will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by worship at 6:30 p.m. here at St. Paul. Please bring a dish to share and stay for the service with a message from Pastor Mark, the imposition of ashes, and holy communion. Help is needed to put the food in the frig before worship begins and again after worship to clean up. Please sign-up to help on the Ash Wednesday Potluck forms that will be passed in church on Sunday. The purpose of the sign-up is simply to give us an idea of the variety of food items coming. It is NOT a must to sign up. It is far more important to have you with us to fellowship and worship. So please join us for 5:30 p.m. potluck even if you don't let us know in advance what you are bringing. Much Gratitude, Julie Woessner



Following Ash Wednesday, on the other Wednesdays in Lent, we will join our Tri-Church partners for worship in their buildings.



WORSHIP WITH OUR TRI-CHURCH PARTNERS

St. Paul is again participating in worship on Wednesdays with our tri-church partners, Immanuel and St. John's. These Wednesdays are March 12 - April 9. The theme for these services is "Turning Toward God's Abundance" and will focus on five divine attributes: faithfulness, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love.

St. John's will host the mid-day service. Please gather for lunch starting about 11:15 a.m. and worship will follow at 12:15 p.m.

Immanuel will host the evening service. Please gather for supper starting about 5:00 p.m. and worship will follow at 6:00 p.m.

All are welcome!

St. Paul is responsible for the luncheons served on Wednesday, March 19 and Wednesday, April 9 at St. John's. We presently have volunteers to provide the soups and salads, and all we need is kitchen help on both days. The kitchen help will be responsible for set-up, serving, and clean-up beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 19.....2 kitchen volunteers needed

Wednesday, April 9.....3 kitchen volunteers needed

Please text or call Julie Woessner if you are available to lend a hand either day. 815-441-8084

This year's weekly themes:

March 12	Faithfulness	Pastor Bree
March 19	Mercy	Pastor Jacob
March 26	Compassion	Pastor Bree
April 2	Forgiveness	Pastor Bree
April 9	Love	Pastor Jacob



Holy Week at St. Paul

Worship will be at St. Paul on Good Friday, April 19. Gather for a potluck in the fellowship hall at 5:30 p.m. as we recognize the last supper of Jesus with His disciples. Following our meal together, at approx.. 6:15 p.m. we will move to the sanctuary for a Good Friday Tenebrae service. Gabby will have an activity for the children during this part of the evening.

Church Announcements

CLEO (Church Ladies Eating Out)

CLEO meet monthly at 5:30 p.m. at a designated restaurant. The March outing on Monday, March 31. They will be going to The Factory in Sterling. If you are unable to attend because of bad weather or personal reasons, please join us the next month. If you need a ride or have any questions, please contact Judy Bartel at 815-751-6768. All are welcome!



Menz Group will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sterling on Monday, March 3, at 6:00 p.m.

Please keep our home visitation members and friends in your thoughts and prayers. If you would like the address for anyone listed here, please contact Sue in the church office.

Shirley Dodd	Lori Dewey	Lila Edeus
Katherine Janssen	Sandy Julifs	Viola Koster
Cliff Miller	Sandra Sweitzer	Dale Worley



St. Paul Year Budget Report

2025 Budget \$293,589 (\$24,466 Monthly)

Totals through February 27, 2025

Budgeted Expenses \$48,932

Offerings/Interest \$19,981

Expenses \$3,209

Lutheran World Relief Quilting

Our next quilting day is March 19. Please join us in the Social Hall between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

No sewing experience is needed as we tie and pin the quilts. We have completed 51 quilts to date. They will be displayed on our church pews in September before being shipped to those in need.

Thank you for your donations of clean, spot-free sheets and blankets to use within our quilts. Thank you also for the pretty quilting material that we use for our tops of the quilts. Donations can be put in the closet next to the kitchen/

If you have questions regarding the quilting contact Dawn Waite (815-631-8142) or Debbie O'Brien (815-441-0257).



Sound/Livestream volunteers needed. We are need of more volunteers to help out with the sound system on Sunday mornings. If you would like to learn or see all what's involved, please see Greg Zeigler. Thank you in advance!



NAME TAG SUNDAYS!

Starting March 2, we will begin name tag Sundays on the first Sunday of each month. This will help us all! The ushers will remind us to make our own nametags as we enter the sanctuary.

HOLY COMMUNION during Lenten Sundays

For the five Sundays of Lent, communion will be offered both at the rail and at the base of the steps in front of the altar. Pastor will alternate his Sunday locations, but will bless all of the communion elements. This will require more communion servers. Please call Sue in the office, or contact a council member if you would like to help with communion distribution.



Friendship Pads/Connect Cards/Prayer Request Papers

The Worship Team is streamlining our paper in the pews! Look for new connect cards where you can share all of your details. These also have a place for prayer requests. As always, if you would like to have Pastor include your prayer request in that Sunday's public prayers, please hand your connect card to an usher during the gathering hymn.



Stewardship – Thank God by Giving

God has given us two hands,

One to receive with and the

Other to give with.

All Christians are but God's stewards.

Everything we have is on loan from the Lord.

Entrusted to us for a while

To use in serving Him.

Give generously with a grateful heart.

No one has ever become poor by giving.

Treat your treasures as a trust; God will meet your deepest needs.

Use your talents!!



BIRTHDAYS FOR OUR CHURCH MEMBERS & FRIENDS

If you don't see your name on this list or there is a correction to be made,
please let Sue know in the church office.

2 Feona Pfundstein

5 Cliff Pfundstein

6 Dale Worley

10 Jacob Reitzel

12 Chris Engstrom

13 Scott Wolber

15 Kam Eilers

18 Liz Spaulding

22 Lyle Spaulding

24 **Eugene Strike – 94**

Joan Jensen – 90

25 Austin Petty

26 Collin Zollinger

28 Dawn Waite

31 Sarah Wolber

Happy 9th Anniversary

March 14, 2015

Joe & Pam Machan

Happy 49th Anniversary

March 20, 1976

Mark & Patty Arians



Youth News!

Children's Offering

The March Children's Offering we will be supporting the harvest of food for those in need through the Buddy Bag Program, a free meal program that provides food to school kids on the weekends, when school lunch is not available. The need is great, on average they pack 130 lunches each week. The cost of each bag is \$3.46. The Tri-Church Youth help to pack these several times during the school year.



Confirmation 2024-2025

St. Paul has a multi-year confirmation program for **6th-8th graders** students who desire the Rite of Confirmation typically Affirm their Baptism in the fall of their 9th grade year.

Confirmation is a special time of intentional exploration of our faith through Bible Study, questions, service, worship, retreats and more! It is an opportunity to learn about God, Lutheranism, ourselves & others. There are MANY opportunities to grow in faith, love & service!



At this time Confirmation classes will not meet on Sunday mornings here at St. Paul but will meet with Immanuel and St. John's through monthly Sunday gatherings from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Each session will include a light lunch which the host church for that session provides. **The schedule for the year is below.** The dates with an * are still being confirmed. Items in *italics* are service or fellowship events. PLEASE aim to participate as you are able. Friends are welcome! This schedule is subject to change.

2024-2025 Tri Church Confirmation Schedule

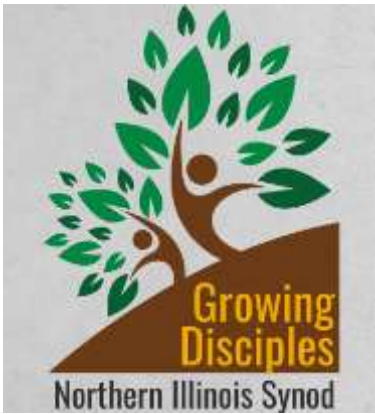
March 2, 2025; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. John's, New Testament

April 6, 2025; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at St. Paul, New Testament

**April 30, 2025; 7 p.m. Buddy Bags Packing*

May 4, 2025; 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Immanuel, New Testament (Wrap-up Party & Review)

Make plans to join us in exploring your faith this year!



Northern IL Synod 2025 Focus

Earlier this year, Bishop Stacie Fidler, announced our focus for 2025: Growing Disciples. It will be a year of intentionally returning to the roots of who we are as the body of Christ, listening to the life of Jesus, and growing deeper in our faith and our following.

Every month will have a theme related to following Jesus, an area of discipleship we can grow and nurture in our lives. We will explore the seven different marks of discipleship and invite each other to grow deeper roots in each area through practice, study, and opening of our hearts and lives, just as the original disciples did. A

bulletin insert will be shared. These bulletin inserts are a starting place and will include an introduction to the monthly theme and an invitation to go deeper.

Growing Disciples is a time for each member, each congregation to return to the roots of who we are as the body of Christ, listen to the life of Jesus, and grow deeper in our faith and our following. Every month will have a theme related to following Jesus, an area of discipleship we can grow and nurture in our lives. We will explore 7 different marks of discipleship and invite each other to grow deeper roots in each area, through practice, study, and opening of our hearts and lives, just as the original disciples did. We will share prayers, social media posts, monthly bulletin inserts, and blog posts from across our synod along with additional resources that you are welcome to use. Workshops and opportunities at CRE and Synod Assembly will invite you into ways to grow as a disciple. If you have a particular story of discipleship to share in one of these areas, let us know! This is an opportunity to grow and walk together. This is an opportunity to grow and walk together. ~ Bishop Stacie Fidler



Growing Disciples
Starts With
Prayer

Prayer is the way a disciple enjoys an intimate relationship with God. Prayer can be private or public, ritualized or conversational, silent or out loud, spoken or sung, words or action, simple or profound. Through prayer God's will is discerned, and greater clarity is gained for our journey. Prayer is powerful. God's

creative, redeeming, and healing power is often directed through prayer.

There is no one way to pray; each of us will find a different way to pray that centers us on being open to how God is being revealed through prayer. Prayer is adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Sometimes prayer invites us to move our body or to think of something or someone specific. Often times we find ourselves in moments of prayer without any words.

What is your favorite way to pray?

Throughout our Growing Disciples year, you are invited to find what types of prayer fill your soul. Maybe it is writing intercessory prayers for your congregation to use. Maybe it is through writing poetry or playing music.

Exploring ancient and new prayer practices is a great way of growing in your faith life and centering on who God is calling us to be.

Explore the resources below as you discover new prayer practices that help you grow in your faith and your calling as a disciple.

Feel free to use the finger labyrinth below in your daily prayer practice. Use your finger to trace along the grooves as you open yourself to the prayers on your heart.



Prayer Resources

[ELCA Prayer Ventures](#)

ELCA Prayer Ventures offers daily prayers each month. These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social, and outreach ministries of the ELCA, as well as for the needs and circumstances of our neighbors, communities, and world.

[Bread for the Day](#)

Bread for the Day is a daily-use devotional resource filled with rich treasures. It is designed for personal, household, or group devotions. This is the perfect resource for individuals, congregations, households, Bible study groups, prayer groups, pastors, church councils, outreach teams,

confirmation students, and teachers.

[Resources for Crafting Prayers of Intercession](#)

Evangelical Lutheran Worship encourages that “The prayers [of intercession] are prepared locally for each occasion” (ELW. p. 105). How can this be done? What practices are useful? What resources can help? Listed below are several resources from ELCA Worship or Augsburg Fortress.

[Many Ways to Pray: Walking a Labyrinth](#)

A reflection on what it looks like to walk a labyrinth and its impact on personal prayer.

[Finger Labyrinths](#)

A variety of finger labyrinths that you may use in your personal prayer life.

[Seven Faith Practices Bible Study: Pray](#)

Living Faith in Daily Life: A four-session small group study on prayer. A four-session small group study on prayer.

Community Announcements

Breaking Bread Together BBT

Breaking Bread Together (BBT)

BBT will not be meeting in March/April due to Wednesday Lenten lunches and worships.

Congregational Resourcing Event 2025

Join leaders from across our synod for
a day of learning, networking,
worshipping, and growing as disciples.

March 22, 2025

Sauk Valley Community College

9:00 - 3:45

\$35 per person

Register at

www.nisynod.org/cre



Northern
Illinois
Synod



Growing Disciples



JULY 20-24, 2025

6-8 pm, Free Dinner at 5:30

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rock Falls, IL

COMMUNITY
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

FROZEN DINNERS

SINGLE-SERVING
SIZE

FAMILY SIZE

CONGREGATION
SIZE

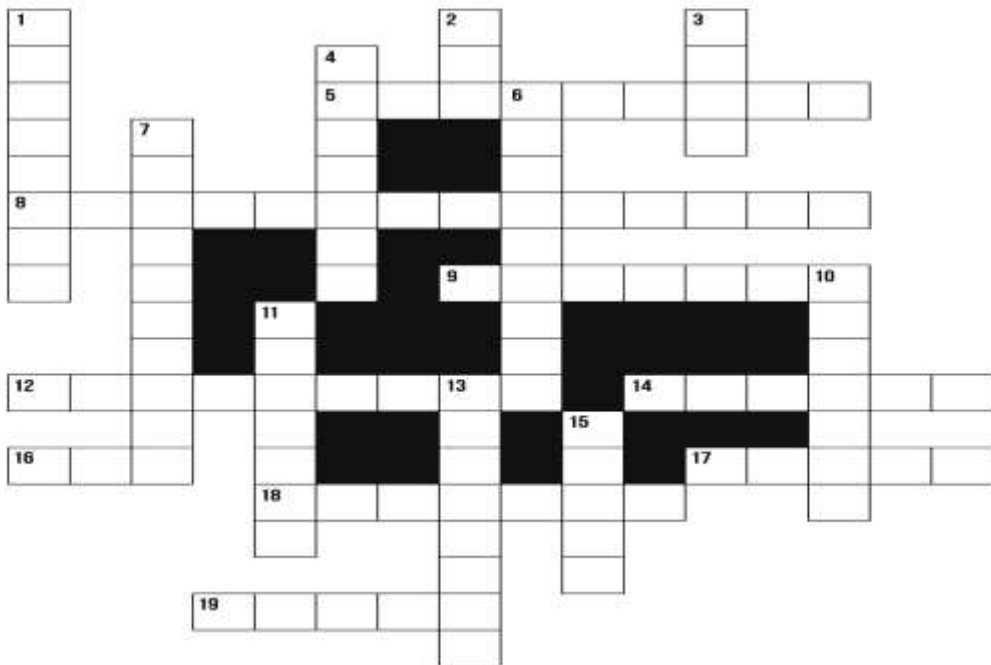
AISLE
3

Campbell.

"I never volunteered to cook church
suppers until I discovered these."

Puzzle!

Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." Complete this crossword that emphasizes the natural phenomena of God's created world.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. windy snowstorm | 12. mass of snow, earth or rocks sliding down a mountain |
| 2. thick, obscuring mist | 13. the degree of moisture in the air |
| 3. frozen rain pellets | 14. a spring that spews boiling water and steam |
| 4. an area's normal weather conditions | 15. condensed water vapor in the atmosphere |
| 5. sudden electrostatic discharge in the sky | 16. frozen water |
| 6. violent tropical storm | 17. deluge |
| 7. shaking of the earth's crust | 18. when day and night are of equal length |
| 8. northern lights | 19. frozen dew or vapor |
| 9. partial or full blockage of the sun or moon | |
| 10. wearing away of the soil | |
| 11. large mass of snow and ice | |

TELEPHONE PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP

We welcome your prayer requests and also your praise reports:

(Want to be a part of this? Call the church office.)

Church office – 815-625-3069

Janie Billings

Judy Bartel

Greg Zeigler

James 5:16 *Pray one for another.*

DIRECTORY OF STAFF and CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL

Pastor Mark Luepke

pastormark@stpaulsterling.com

Sue Dirks, Parish Secretary

(815) 535-3574 – sue@stpaulsterling.com

Gabby Law, Children Ministry

(815) 981-6470 – gabby@stpaulsterling.com

Dawn Zeigler, Music Coordinator

(815) 275-3775 – dawn@stpaulsterling.com

Julie Woessner, Children's Music Leader/Worship Song Leader

(815) 441-8084 – 4woessner@comcast.net

Shawn Andrews, Custodian

(779) 775-4530



2025 Congregation Council

President – Greg Zeigler

Vice President – Mary Ordean

Treasurer – Chrissy Zollinger

Secretary – Stacey Avelar

Christian Education/Youth

Stacey Avelar ('27)

Stewardship

Greg Zeigler ('27)

Social Outreach

Stacey Avelar ('27)

Lay Ministry & Worship

Chrissy Zollinger ('27)

Julie Woessner ('27)

Property & Management

Dan Bartel ('26)

Members-at-large

David Carrillo ('27)

Mary Ordean ('26)

Rayce Gale ('27)

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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**– DATED MATERIAL –
PLEASE DO NOT HOLD**



LOVING – SERVING – SHARING

DIRECTORY

Office (815) 625-3069

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday; 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friday – 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pastor Mark's hours – Tuesdays – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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Facebook: St. Paul Lutheran Church – Sterling, IL